

Water for the Poor

Description of Initiative

This Initiative aims to improve sustainable management of fresh water resources in developing countries. It has accelerated and expanded international efforts to achieve the UN Millennium Declaration Goals and implement the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation including the goal of halving, by 2015, “the proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water” and the “proportion of people without access to basic sanitation.”

The Initiative involves more than 74 USAID Regional and Bilateral Missions and their implementation partners.

Major accomplishments include the following:

- USAID’s Peaceful Communities Initiative helped develop the first trans-border drinking water system in the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan since the countries gained independence from the Soviet Union;
- USAID wells and pipelines have nearly doubled the amount of water available for about 400,000 residents in the West Bank;
- USAID funded the provision of emergency water supplies and the creation of a sustainable management system helping 35,000 people affected by recurrent droughts in Eritrea;
- USAID/Indonesia’s water supply improvement and cost recovery program has enabled local water utilities to expand reliable coverage at sustainable and affordable rates to an additional 905,000 people in 2003.

Mainstreaming / Sustainability

In Fiscal Year 2003, the Initiative provided \$329 million toward water resources management projects. As a result, more than 19 million people have improved access to safe water supplies and sanitation. The financial mechanisms in different countries vary.

The United States proposed a total of up to \$970 million to be invested over the three years of the Initiative (2003-2005). It is anticipated that these investments will leverage additional financing of \$630 million, bringing the Initiative total to more than \$1.6 billion for water-related activities globally.

Investment in local currency partial guarantees to encourage private investment in water services, coupled with technical assistance from USAID’s Development Credit Authority, has leveraged \$45 million in Morocco and Egypt. This ability to generate local investment is a key component of ensuring the sustainability of the initiative’s accomplishments.

Replicating the Initiative

The United States will invest nearly \$400 million over three years to promote management and protection of water resources at the watershed scale. Activities will include the development of regional and national policies and regulatory frameworks for joint and integrated management of shared water resources, using advanced technologies – such as Geographic Information Systems – for better watershed management and interventions to reduce contamination.